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PREVENTION OF THE VIOLENT
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HUMAN RIGHTS QUESTIONS: HUMAN RIGHTS
SITUATIONS AND REPORTS OF SPECIAL
RAPPORTEURS AND REPRESENTATIVES

SECURITY COUNCIL
Fifty-third year

Letter dated 13 March 1998 from the Permanent Representative of Bulgaria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of the joint declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of countries of south-eastern Europe, Mr. Andrei Plesu, Mr. Blagoi Handziski, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihaylova and Mr. Theodoros Pangalos, concerning the situation in Kosovo, which was adopted at Sofia on 10 March 1998.

I would be grateful if the text of the present letter and its annex would be circulated as a document of the General Assembly under items 65 and 113 (c) of the preliminary list, and of the Security Council.

(Signed) Philip DIMITROV
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

* A/53/50.

ANNEX

Joint declaration of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of countries of south-eastern Europe concerning the situation in Kosovo, adopted at Sofia on 10 March 1998

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of countries of south-eastern Europe, Mr. Andrei Plesu, Mr. Blagoi Handziski, Mr. Ismail Cem, Mrs. Nadezhda Mihaylova and Mr. Theodoros Pangalos, express their serious concern with the deteriorating situation in Kosovo and with the grave consequences of an inter-ethnic conflict and its possible spillover in the region.

The Ministers declare the commitment of their States to take all appropriate steps in order to prevent such a development in the region of south-eastern Europe.

The Ministers reiterate that a first step to reduce tensions in Kosovo is the initiation of a genuine dialogue between the Serb authorities and the ethnic Albanians, and call on both parties to take prompt measures to that end. Both parties should condemn and refrain from use of violence as a means to resolve their conflict.

They deeply regret the suppression by the Serbian police of peaceful demonstrations in Kosovo and the subsequent unrestrained use of force that has resulted in fatalities. At the same time, they urge all organizations of the Kosovo Albanian community to make clear their opposition to violence and terrorism as tools to seek change. They condemn terrorist actions to achieve political goals, as well as violence as a means to repress political views.

The Ministers call for the full respect of the human rights and fundamental freedoms of the ethnic Albanian population. They declare that a lasting solution to the Kosovo problem can be based only on the full protection of the rights of Albanians, Serbs and all others living in Kosovo in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations, the Helsinki principles and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) standards.

The Ministers call for the immediate and full implementation of the agreement on education concluded in 1996 between President Milosevic and Mr. Rugova, leader of the Albanians in Kosovo.

The Ministers underline that the solution to the Kosovo problem should be sought with full respect to the existing borders. They call on all organizations of the ethnic Albanians to deny any secessionist policies and to respect fully the territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Ministers call on Belgrade to face the problems with utmost responsibility and to search for mutually acceptable solutions based on granting a large autonomy for Kosovo within the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia.

The Ministers believe that the integration of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia into the international community would be to the benefit of that

country and would strengthen the stability of the region. They also recognize that considerable progress towards the solution of the Kosovo issue will contribute to this end.

The Ministers call on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to enable the return of the international monitors in Kosovo as a means of preventive diplomacy.

The Ministers declare the readiness of their States to play an active role in the efforts to find a peaceful and political solution to all issues related to the Kosovo problem. Within this framework, they also welcome the initiatives of the United States of America, the European Union and the Contact Group.

The Ministers call on all States in the region and beyond to support this declaration and to join the efforts towards preserving peace, stability and security in south-eastern Europe.